

PUBLIC HOUSING NEEDS

Public Housing Improvements

The Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) has been selected by HUD as one of thirty authorities nationwide to take part in HUD's Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration. MTW offers high-performing housing authorities the opportunity to assume responsibility for local determination of many program parameters, in hopes that they will be able to better cope with decreasing federal subsidies without reducing the housing services they provide. The City of Cambridge welcomes the CHA's participation in MTW and notes that adapting to local factors is especially important in Cambridge as the City and its housing market continues to adjust to the recent end of rent control, and escalating land and housing costs.

The Cambridge Housing Authority was awarded a \$5 million HOPE VI revitalization grant for the elderly for its oldest federally -assisted elderly development, John F. Kennedy Apartments. The CHA also plans to leverage more than \$17 million from other sources, for a total development cost of \$22.5 million; \$19 million will allow the CHA to comprehensively modernize the building, reconfigure cramped studio units into one-bedroom units, and to develop 25 units of assisted living housing. The remaining \$3.5 million, including \$560,000 in HOME fund support from the City and \$250,000 in McKinney Acquisition grant funds, will be dedicated to the acquisition of 14 one-bedroom scattered site units targeted to the young disabled population. Related to this project, the CHA is exploring the possibility that it could provide up to 39 rental subsidies for moderate to low-income families with incomes between 50%-80% of area median income at a non-profit development. To date, CHA has acquired 9 of 14 scattered site units. These plans will result in no net loss of affordable housing with the potential to increase the number of units by up to thirty-nine. Construction began in January of 2002.

The CHA successfully applied for Resident Opportunity and Supportive Services grant (ROSS) of \$ 500,000 for Federal FY 2001. These funds are supporting the CHA's award-winning youth unemployment prevention program, the Work Force. CHA has also received two additional federal supportive services grants, for Service Coordinators. These grants total \$384,797: \$200,335 (one year term) for its federally-assisted conventional public housing and \$184,462 (three year term) for the CHA's Roosevelt Towers and Putnam School developments.

The CHA seeks to further decrease the level of drug use among youth through a program provided with the funds it may receive from HUD's Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP). As new funds are not available from HUD for FY2003, the CHA will use its FY 2001 grant to continue activities under this program, including security patrols, pre-employment training for public housing youth, and security coordination with the local police and prosecutors. The program also helps support the Recreational Activities Program (RAP) at Washington Elms and Newtowne Court developments, a

program operated by residents of the two developments to provide sports activities, trips, arts and crafts, and other activities to young residents. Losing the funds provided by the PHDEP, a program that originated in 1989, will deal a serious blow to CHA's efforts in both lease enforcement and youth programming.

Public Housing Resident Initiative

An integral part of the Cambridge Housing Authority's program is the involvement of its residents in management operations. For much of the Authority's history, federal and state-funded developments had tenant councils and the Board of the CHA has included at least one tenant, although the current Board includes two residents.

Over the coming year, the CHA residents will continue their ongoing participation in the selection of authority staff members, in grievance panel hearings, and in all phases of the modernization of their developments. A \$100,000 Tenant Opportunity Program (TOP) grant was received for Newtowne Court in FY97. TOP grants were also awarded in FY98 for Roosevelt Towers and Putnam Gardens. The Authority will continue its involvement with these and other organized residents in the coming year.